



LEGISLATION FAVORING LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

WHOLE NO. 1220 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1934 FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 24, No. 35

Flexibility of Trade Union Policies Stressed by Morrison

Secretary of A. F. of L., in Labor Day Message, Says Unions Are Free to Map Their Own Course, With Due Regard to Equal Rights of Other Trades—Cites Organization of Workers in Mass Production as Example of Flexibility of Union Rules.

The adaptability of the American trade union movement to revolutionary changes in production, in which former separate trades overlap, is stressed by Frank Morrison, secretary of the American Federation of Labor, in his Labor Day message for 1934.

"Mr. Morrison cites the nation-wide organization of the workers in the mass production industries by the A. F. of L. as a striking example of interpreting union rules regarding jurisdiction according to the imperative need of organizing the workers in those industries into bona fide unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor."

Mr. Morrison's Labor Day message, entitled "Flexibility of Trade Union Policies," was prepared for the Labor Day editions of the official and weekly labor press and issued from the A. F. of L. headquarters in Washington, D. C.

The text of the message follows:

"The enactment of the National Recovery Act, which enumerates in definite and unmistakable language the policy of the United States Government recognizing the right of workers to join a union of their own choosing, has aroused wide-spread interest among unorganized workers in establishing membership in unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor."

"The purpose of workers in joining a labor union is to remedy grievances and secure improved standards in conditions of labor in the particular work at which they are employed. In no other type of labor organization has the worker greater freedom to deal with questions relating to the line of conduct which is of immediate interest to him, than is afforded in the trade union."

"The members of trade unions are free to chart their course in whatever way appeals to them as promoting their best interests so long as there may be no infringement of the rights of other workers or organizations."

"They may join with members of other trades to act unitedly in a given situation or they may amalgamate with other organizations as the wisdom of these acts may suggest themselves."

"Organizations in industries such as the building trades, metal trades, printing trades and in the railroad industry, have formed federations to establish mutual relations in the consideration of questions affecting the interests of their particular trades and callings. The machinery exists to promote unity of action as far as the workers wish to apply such policy."

"An instance of the flexibility of trade union policies to adapt themselves to the needs of the workers, is the resolution adopted by a conference of national and international organizations in interest, authorizing the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to conduct an organized campaign among the workers in mass production industries and place them in local unions directly chartered by the American Federation of Labor; and where workers are taken into these local unions that come under the jurisdiction of one or more national or international organizations, which is a temporary infringement of the rights of these organizations involved, that the Executive Council adjust such difficulties in the spirit of taking full advantage of the immediate situation with the ultimate recognition of the rights of all concerned."

"Automatic machinery, the application of scientific processes and the introduction of new materials are revolutionizing production methods. This has caused the overlapping of trades formerly separate and distinct. The trade union movement provides orderly measures for the workers affected to adjust these questions through conference and agreement on a basis satisfactory to them."

P. J. McGuire, Father of Labor Day, Gives Account of Its Birth

Editor's Note.—P. J. McGuire, founder of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and the originator of Labor Day, wrote an article for the Labor Day message for 1934. The article was published in the official journal of the American Federation of Labor, giving an account of Labor Day. Mr. McGuire was elected secretary of the American Federation of Labor at its first annual convention held at Chicago during 1887 and 1888. He was elected second vice-president in 1889, first vice-president in 1890, and continued to serve as a member of the Executive Council until 1909. Mr. McGuire's life follows:

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LABOR DAY

By P. J. McGuire
First Vice-President, American Federation of Labor, 1889-1909

On this day the hosts of labor worthy their Homestead!

From a thousand groves and hillside, by rattling breezes and gurgling streams, comes the glad acclaim.

No festival of martial glory or warrior's renown is this; no pageant pomp of warlike conquest, no glory of fratricidal strife attend this day.

It is dedicated to peace, civilization and the triumph of industry. It is a demonstration of fraternity and the harbinger of better days.

When labor shall be best honored and well rewarded.

The fathers are remembered of the bodies participating should contribute to the expenses in proportion to its membership.

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Each union or organization should get the most solid the greater would be the profits to the society itself. It is the duty of every worker to contribute to the money realized by sale of tickets through its members. In the

Legislative History of Labor Day as National Holiday

Fifty-third Congress, in 1894, When Grover Cleveland Was President, Unanimously Passed the Bill, Jointly Introduced by Senator Kyle of South Dakota and Representative Cummings of New York, Designating First Monday in September as Labor Day Falling on Sunday Because It Would Shock His "Presbyterianism."

Senator Cockrell of Missouri Wanted Date Changed to First Day in September in the Interest of Legislative "Symmetry." Senator Sherman of Ohio Objected to Labor Day Falling on Sunday Because It Would Shock His "Presbyterianism."

The movement to secure the enactment of legislation to make Labor Day a general holiday began in the 1880s, according to the American Federation of Labor, which unanimously adopted the following resolution introduced by A. C. Cameron, a delegate from the Chicago Trades and Labor Alliance:

"Resolved, That the first Monday in September of each year be set aside as a national holiday, and that we recommend its observance by all workers, irrespective of sex, calling or nationality."

During the next ten years organized labor devoted its attention to securing legislation making Labor Day a national holiday. By 1893 the legislative center of the States had been shifted to Washington, D. C.

Labor Day Bills in Fifty-third Congress

When the Fifty-third Congress convened in 1894, the American Federation of Labor endeavored to secure passage of a bill establishing Labor Day as a national holiday.

Shortly after the convening of the Fifty-third Congress, the House of Representatives, called by President Grover Cleveland, passed a bill establishing Labor Day as a national holiday, which contained the following provisions:

"The first Monday in September of each year be set aside as a national holiday, and that we recommend its observance by all workers, irrespective of sex, calling or nationality."

The bill was introduced by Senator Kyle of South Dakota and Representative Cummings of New York, and was passed by the House of Representatives on September 1, 1894.

The Congressional Record for August 23, 1894, in its account of the Senate action on the bill, stated that the bill was passed by the Senate on August 23, 1894.

"Mr. Kyle introduced a bill (H. R. 720) making Labor Day a legal holiday, which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and on September 1, 1894, the bill was reported to the House of Representatives."

In the House proceedings for September 1, 1894, the following account of the bill was given:

"By Mr. CUMMINGS: A bill (H. R. 720) making Labor Day a legal holiday, which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and on September 1, 1894, the bill was reported to the House of Representatives."

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Cummings Bill Reported to House

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National Income Is Unjustly Distributed, Green Declares

President of A. F. of L. Claims Collapse of Economic Structure Was Caused by Employers Taking Larger Part of Labor's Increased Productivity—Organization of Workers in Independent Unions Necessary to Restore Balance Between Production and Distribution.

The absolute necessity of correcting the inequities of distribution of income so that more shall go to wage earners and small salary earners is stressed by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in his Labor Day message prepared for the weekly and official labor press.

Accompanying this change in methods of distribution, Mr. Green points out the imperative need for institutions to give the workers the same protection accorded to those who own property.

To accomplish these purposes, Mr. Green declares that working men and women must be thoroughly organized in bona fide trade unions.

Mr. Green's Labor Day message was issued from the headquarters of the American Federation of Labor in Washington, D. C.

The text of the message follows:

"Labor Day finds our country midway in perhaps the most important economic upheavals of our existence—a realignment of forces of industry, control under federal authority. It is a time when we are making decisions which will determine this issue: Shall we plan for future production of abundance for all, or shall we try to curb mass production into scarcity channels with luxury for the few and poverty for the many?"

"The technical information handed on to us by past generations and inventive power of present day workers have completely revolutionized work. The work limit is no longer human endurance but the installation of machines, organization of work force and orders. Orders for products are sent upon upon incomes of hours of power and power.

"In retail markets are wage earners and small salaried persons. This is the reason why prices correspond to the rise and fall in pay envelopes."

"Many of our economic troubles have grown out of failure to see that electric power production brought a vast age—the age of plenty for all. In the days of handicraft and production limited by human endurance, we could not produce enough or at such low prices as to make possible comfort standards of living for all. There were well-to-do people and a few wealthy."

"From 1923 to 1929, each industrial worker increased the amount he turned out each hour four per cent every year. During the past depression (1929-1934) the increase in hourly output has been slightly more than four per cent per year. In this period of rapid increase in productivity, the incomes going to owners of property increased 66 per cent—over two-thirds. The incomes of factory employees—those who did the actual work in turning out the increased production—rose only 10 per cent."

"During the depression years while output still increased per man hour, factory incomes declined 58 per cent (1929-33) while the incomes of those owning property fell 68 per cent."

"The cause of this difference? Because the rules of distribution were made at a time when the producer owned what he made, and have not been brought up to date to provide equality for the producer who is hired to work for a management that sells the product and determines what part shall be paid the worker-producer."

"Because workers have not shared proportionately in their increased productivity, buying power in the retail markets has not been adequate to sustain the large amounts which owners of capital have invested. Even in peak years no industry operates at capacity. This means producing investments had to pay for idle investments."

"In an economic structure built on specialization and inter-relation, inequities in distribution of incomes brings unbalance in production and distribution of products and services that wreck the social order. The unbalance was one of the basic causes of the collapse of 1929. Too much of our national income has gone into speculation in securities on the Stock Exchange and speculative investments generally, and not enough into the pockets of those who brought the output of industry."

"Two things are needed: To increase the amount of national income going into wages and small salaries so as to maintain a balance between production and consumption that will use products and services for higher standards of living; and to organize the economic institutions that will protect the interests of producing workers equally with the interests of the owners of these products and other property."

"To accomplish these two purposes organization of wage earners in independent unions is essential for the promotion of wage earners' interests. In the present age under the National Recovery Act as well as in all other periods, the union is the beginning and continuing agency indispensable for wage earners' progress. It is most fitting that Labor Day unite in establishing standards when employers readily set up branches on either side of the boundary."

"May every union and every central labor body in the United States and Canada find in the day new inspiration for work and new plans to be executed. When every wage earner is a union member, disciplined in working together with fellow workers in making effective the principles of the union movement and accustomed to work as a soldier in the ranks of labor, then our national labor movement will be able to negotiate with agreements that fully protect the interests of those who work for wages and to assure public institutions that will safeguard labor's rights."

"I urge all unions and all labor to dedicate Labor Day to the advancement of these purposes, by planning union-forward campaigns."

"Although the figures for Canada are not available, the continuity of industrial organization from the Mexican border northward makes the principle equally applicable to the Canadian situation. Canadian industries have set up approximately 200 branches in Canada. Canadians have an established habit of investing generously in United States undertakings. The workers of the two countries have long known they must unite in establishing standards when employers readily set up branches on either side of the boundary."

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30-HOUR WEEK LAW AND JOBLESS INSURANCE ARE URGED BY LEWIS

President of United Mine Workers, in Labor Day Message, Also Demands Stricter Enforcement of Labor Section of Recovery Act and Censured Operation of Business Against the Common Welfare.

The demand that business leaders regard social justice as an element in industry, the prompt enactment of legislation to insure the unemployed, and the establishment of unemployment insurance, are among the demands urged by John L. Lewis, international president of the United Mine Workers of America.

The text of Mr. Lewis's message, issued from the headquarters of the United Mine Workers in Washington, D. C., follows:

"The past year, industry, and, more important, the nation, has been through a period of economic depression. It is not plain that the nation is passing through the great industrial enterprise on which the nation would be largely dependent. It is a time when we are making decisions which will determine this issue: Shall we plan for future production of abundance for all, or shall we try to curb mass production into scarcity channels with luxury for the few and poverty for the many?"

"The technical information handed on to us by past generations and inventive power of present day workers have completely revolutionized work. The work limit is no longer human endurance but the installation of machines, organization of work force and orders. Orders for products are sent upon upon incomes of hours of power and power.